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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO ELISA CATALANO; ISN/RA RICHARD NEPHEW

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TAGS: PREL IR AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA AGREES WITH U.S. POSTURE ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

REF: STATE 120288

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Edgard D. Kagan for reasons 1.4 (b) a nd (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Australia is in complete agreement with the P5 1 two track approach to Iran's nuclear program. It has lobbied for this approach at APEC and the East Asian Summit and has made its views clear to Iran. When there is a need for further sanctions because of Iranian refusal of IAEA and P5 1 proposals, Australia is ready to increase its pressure. End summary.

¶2. (C) Jenny Bloomfield, Director of the Middle East Section of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), emphasized on November 23 strong Australian support for the P5 1's two track approach of negotiation or sanctions with Iran. Australia is ready to change tracks if and when its partners on the IAEA's Board of Governors deem it necessary. She said DFAT briefed the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on the Iran nuclear issue before the East Asia Summit and APEC, and at their respective meetings, PM Rudd and FM Smith shared and lobbied for that approach with their counterparts. Australia also regularly shares its views on the importance of IAEA and P5 1 positions with Iranian officials, both here in Canberra and in Tehran.

¶3. (C) Bloomfield said that Australia is currently exploring ways of increasing pressure on Iran by further tightening existing regulations and by pursuing further sanctions if Iran refuses to accept the offers on the table from the IAEA, France, Russia and the United States. Presently, Australia imposes all Security Council sanctions on Iranian individuals and entities having verifiable connections with Iranian WMD programs. It also has imposed mirrored sanctions to those of the EU since October 2008. These are more flexible and can be imposed on individuals and entities without the same burden of proof required by the UN Security Council. As negotiations continue with Iran on its future nuclear programs, Australia is open to all options required by the second track if there is no negotiated solution.

¶4. (C) DFAT's Bloomfield said Australia stands ready to work with the United States and its partners on either track of the present policy with Iran because the government wants the same outcome -- an Iran without nuclear weaponry.

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